



HOWARD KENNEDY
... hat-trick

KENNEDY STARS AS WYCOMBE HIT TOP SCORE

25-4-74

By STUART EARP: Welton Rovers 1, Wycombe Wanderers 5

IN by far the worst playing conditions of the season on Saturday, Wycombe Wanderers hit their top score this term when they cruised to a comfortable 5-1 triumph over Welton Rovers in a friendly.

This match, originally scheduled to be the semi-final of the Rothmans "Champion of Champions" competition, clearly underlined the superiority of the Isthmian League over the Western. Wanderers looked by far the more professional outfit and apart from one period of pressure soon into the second half, Welton were rarely in the game.

Five goals must be extremely welcome to the Blues. They have been struggling to find the net consistently all season and for once, the chances they created were put away with the minimum of fuss. Midfielder Howard Kennedy led the way with a well taken hat-trick while Steve Perrin and Dylan Evans hit the other two.

The pitch, despite the continual rain which flooded the nearby village of Midsomer Norton the previous day, looked in fair condition before play began but once underway, it soon turned into a quagmire and made football extremely difficult. The rain also kept the crowds away and only about 400 people braved the elements, many of them from Wycombe.

Mick Holifield, who was decidedly quick over the surface despite the mud, broke through twice early on but missed the target both times and then Cooper cleared off the line from Perrin after 12 minutes.

Winning the bulk of possession in midfield and using it well, it was only a matter of time before Wanderers broke through and in the 16th minute Kennedy notched the first of his trio. A corner was half cleared out to Birdseye who crossed for Searle to take the ball round a defender and blast in a shot. The ball hit the upright but skidded out for Kennedy to side-foot home.

Four minutes later Kennedy made it 2-0 when Holifield's turn beat Tossell all ends up. Mick's cross flew over the rest of the defence to Kennedy who had run well to find space at the far post. Howard selected his spot perfectly and slid the ball home in-off the upright.

Five minutes later Welton wilted again as Perrin rammed in goal number three after Evans had created the chance. Precious little had been seen from the Rovers' front line throughout the first half hour and towering striker Henderson, who had previously scored 11 goals in 11 games, was given no chance to shine at all. John Maskell in the Wycombe goal made four safe catches in the first half but spent most of his time getting soaked.

So at half time, Wanderers were comfortably in the driving seat with three goals under their belts. Perhaps it was this advantage that led to their slump in the second half. After only 60 seconds Maskell dived to make his first save of the game from Rovers' best player Dave Vaughan and soon afterwards Welton snatched a goal back.

A moment's hesitancy in the defence saw Vaughan break through the middle and roll the ball towards the line. Keith Mead hooked it back but the linesman signalled the ball had

crossed the line and the goal was awarded.

Wycombe's reply was instant and they raced upfield forcing five corners on the trot. The fourth goal came after 79 minutes. By this time, Welton were tiring fast and they gave the Blues ample time to work out the move. Evans and Holifield combined well, teeing the ball up for Kennedy to drive in the fourth.

Six minutes from the end, Evans completed the scoring after a swift move out of

defence. Steve Perrin took the ball up the flank and his fine cross gave Evans the chance to control and knock the ball home.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, D. Bullock, G. Hand; H. Kennedy, T. Reardon (sub. G. Mackenzie 81 mins.), M. Holifield; K. Searle, D. Evans, S. Perrin.

WELTON: G. Tarling; B. Tossell, M. Cooper, T. Rhodes, K. Watkins; J. Elliott, K. Granger, D. Clark; D. Vaughan, I. Henderson, C. Stateford. Sub. C. Calloway (not used).

Referee: M. Bevan.
Half time: 3-0. **Goalscorers,** Wycombe — Kennedy 3 (16, 20, 79), Perrin (25), Evans (84). **Welton** — Vaughan (56).